



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Blue Island Fire Department is celebrating its
3 125th anniversary; and

4 WHEREAS, On September 4,1879, 17 men gathered with the
5 purpose of organizing Blue Island's first municipal fire
6 department; until this time, there were several loosely
7 organized fire companies in the young community; the community
8 of Blue Island was founded in 1834 and was an important
9 stopping point for travelers using the famous Vincennes Trail;
10 as the village grew, the need for fire protection became
11 apparent; and

12 WHEREAS, Equipping the newly formed fire department was now
13 the next order of business; it was 15 years before a
14 horse-drawn apparatus was purchased; prior to that, the
15 equipment was pulled by a large force of volunteers; this new
16 fire apparatus was soon proven to be woefully inadequate, as a
17 great fire destroyed three square blocks of homes and
18 businesses; the great Blue Island fire of May 17, 1896,
19 threatened the entire village; assistance from Morgan Park and
20 West Pullman saved the day; and

21 WHEREAS, Steam powered engines served the fire department
22 at the turn of the century; in 1916, the first motorized
23 apparatus was purchased, but the department still held on to
24 the horse-drawn apparatus for several more years; in 1922, the
25 fire department hired its first full-time firefighters;
26 modeled after the Chicago fire department, a two platoon system
27 went into effect; the dark blue uniform shirt for firefighters
28 was also borrowed from Chicago; and

29 WHEREAS, The fire department continued to serve the growing
30 community; newer and more modern equipment was purchased to
31 keep up with the changing face of the fire service; in 1934,

1 the Blue Island fire department assisted Chicago with the
2 stockyards fire; in 1960, a tragedy was avoided as the Lyric
3 Theater was destroyed by fire; although the theater was filled
4 with children enjoying a special Valentines Day show, the
5 department's Chief calmly told them there would be a fire
6 drill, and everyone was safely evacuated; and

7 WHEREAS, As the department approached its centennial,
8 plans were made for a celebration; the second motorized fire
9 engine ever purchased by the City of Blue Island was restored
10 to working condition by the firefighters; Old Bess, as the 1924
11 Seagraves is known, has recently been the darling of the State
12 Fair Twilight parade; and

13 WHEREAS, As the department moved into the 1980s and 1990s,
14 changes included state of the art equipment, the first
15 full-time female firefighter, more diverse, specialized
16 services, and a new emphasis on public education; therefore, be
17 it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
19 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we congratulate the Blue Island Fire Department on the occasion
21 of its 125th anniversary; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to the Blue Island Fire Department as an expression
24 of our respect and esteem.